



## EPILOGUE

Having read the preceding chapters, we are compelled to repeat the question that was posed earlier in our Prologue: in the five centuries that have passed since Florence, what has changed in the Roman Catholic Church? Perhaps it would be more appropriate if we first considered what has not changed, or more precisely, what has re-emerged again in the Roman fold, as the foregoing chapters have demonstrated: arrant paganism, open disdain for God's moral law, ruthless papal (Ustashi) armies, blatant rationalism and syncretism.

The one new ingredient that has been officially added since Florence is the doctrine of papal infallibility.

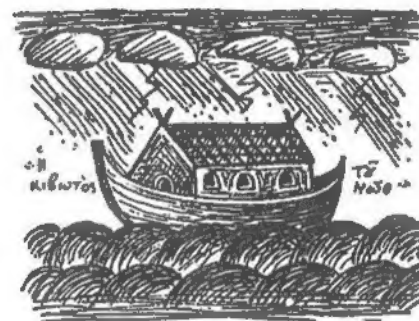
Orthodox ecumenists seek to justify their efforts today by asserting that "Rome has changed today — it is not the same it was before." To which we are compelled to reply, "This is true. The Vatican has changed — but, for the worse, not for the better. From a doctrinal point of view, things are far worse now in the Roman Catholic fold."

Our holy Father, Saint Mark of Ephesus, rejected the union of the false council of Florence-Ferrara. May every true Orthodox Christian likewise follow faithfully in his footsteps, and reject the proposed union of the falsely-called "Sister Churches" today.

ΩΡΑΙΟΝ

# SISTER CHURCHES

*Five Hundred Years After Florence*



The Holy Orthodox Metropolis of Boston  
1994

principal role:' one must admit instead that he 'has all the fullness of this supreme power' (DS 3064).

"In this sense Vatican II speaks of the Bishop of Rome as 'pastor of the entire Church,' having 'full, supreme, and universal power,' (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 22). That power is 'primatial authority over all, whether pastors or faithful' (ibid.).

"The Gospel texts demonstrate that the universal pastoral mission of the Roman Pontiff, the Successor of Peter, entails a doctrinal mission. As universal pastor, the Pope has the mission to proclaim revealed doctrine and to promote true faith in Christ throughout the Church. This is the integral meaning of the Petrine ministry.

". . . the Bishop of Rome, as head of the Episcopal College by the will of Christ, is the first herald of the faith. It is his task to teach revealed truth and to show how it should be applied in human conduct. He has primary responsibility for spreading the faith in the world. This is asserted by the Second Council of Lyon (1274) concerning the Bishop of Rome's primacy and fullness of power, when it directs that 'he has the duty to defend the truth of faith, and it is his responsibility to resolve all disputed matters in the area of faith' (DS 861)."

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*This certainly does not leave much working room for the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue, does it?*

"Sister Churches" indeed!



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"In his general audience of March 10, the Pope reminded his listeners that 'as universal pastor, Peter must act in Christ's name and in harmony with Him' to bring the faith to the entire world. Modern means of travel and communications allow Peter's successor to carry out that mission in previously unimagined ways.

"In his general audience of March 17, Pope John Paul II reminded his listeners that the Bishop of Rome is the heir to the special charism the Lord gave to Peter. The Second Vatican Council affirms that all the Pope's teaching should be listened to, even when it is not given *ex cathedra*. . . .

"In his general audience of March 24, Pope John Paul II explained that alongside the infallibility of *ex cathedra* definitions is the charism of the assistance of the Holy Spirit. This charism is given to the Popes so that they will not err in matters of faith and morals. The Holy Spirit preserves the Pope from error."

### "Vicar of Christ"

Pope John Paul II says in his talks recorded in *Pro Ecclesia*:

"The Second Vatican Council teaches that the Bishop of Rome, as 'Vicar of Christ,' has 'supreme and universal' power over the whole Church (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 22).

"Having said that, we can reread the definition of the Council of Florence (1439), which stated: 'We define that . . . the Roman Pontiff is the Successor of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles and true Vicar of Christ, head of the whole Church, and father and teacher of all Christians; and that upon him, in Blessed Peter, our Lord Jesus Christ concerted the full power of shepherding, ruling, and governing the Universal Church (DS 1307).'

"For its part, Vatican I (1870) cited the Council of Florence's definition (cf. DS 3060) and, after mentioning the Gospel texts (Jn. 1:42; Mt. 16:16f; Jn. 21:15f), expressed the meaning of this power in further detail. The Roman Pontiff 'does not only have the office of inspection and direction,' but enjoys 'full and supreme power of jurisdiction, not only in matters of faith and morals, but also in those which concern the discipline and governance of the Church dispersed throughout the world' (DS 3064).

"Vatican I emphasizes the fullness of papal power and defines that it is not enough to recognize that the Roman Pontiff 'has the



## PROLOGUE

### *Fifteenth Century Florence\**

The city of Florence in the fifteenth century, was, above all, a city of the arts, of politics, and of magnificent processions.

Certainly, the copious sewage that ran down the middle of the streets did present a problem for these resplendent public events. The difficulty was that everything was thrown into the streets: dead cats, old clothes, garbage, household offal of all sorts. The privies — small stone cubicles built in on the street side of the houses — emptied through a slit in the wall into the streets. An odor of putrefaction pervaded all the public thoroughfares. When they could afford it, people burned incense and aromatic spices to overcome the stench of these open cesspools, where peasants and princes alike stepped lightly on their way to their business. Others pressed oranges to their noses to neutralize the malodorous fumes.

Ferrara and Florence — like most of the major cities of Europe — were filled with a detestable odor. In the words of one citizen of Ferrara, the street cleaning was entrusted to the rains of heaven and the voracity of the pigs.

But this did not deter the processions.

The occasions for these glittering displays were sometimes secular, sometimes religious, and oftentimes both. They were truly Renaissance parades — entertaining, loud, extravagant, and more often than not, completely shameless.

One of the more remarkable processions took place during the wedding of the Duke of Ferrara. At the wedding itself, one of the performances given was called *The Triumph of Venus*. The un-

\* Much of the material in this Prologue is from *The Crown of Fire*, by Pierre Van Paassen.

clothed goddess was seated in a golden coach drawn by trained swans. The guests were informed that Jupiter, "the father of the gods," had descended from heaven to watch the spectacle. Jupiter was indeed pointed out seated among the guests in the form of a naked young man. Then Bacchus and Andromeda executed a dance, the details of which, as the contemporary chroniclers remark, "had better be left undescribed."

All this took place "under the eyes of the Pope, without whose consent these festivities would have been unthinkable."

Upon the arrival of the newly married couple in Ferrara, a procession was staged through the streets ending in the banquet hall of the palace. Preceding their Serene Highnesses came the band of silver trumpets and the buffoons, with their waggish foolery, obscene quips, and pranks.

And there, at the end of the procession, or rather at the head of a second procession, made up of the local clergy and the visiting prelates from Rome, came the nude statues of the Greek divinities with the dazzling Venus carried shoulder-high above the crowds. Behind Venus followed a statue of the Mother of God.

In yet another procession, a marble figure of Aphrodite — the goddess of wanton love and erotic seduction — preceded His Holiness, the Pope, as he blessed the people.

At the palace itself, the minstrels sang one of the love songs of Jacopone da Todi; then the orchestra struck up a dance and the guests looked on as the bishops and cardinals danced *la gaillarde* with the charming ladies-in-waiting.

From six or seven o'clock onward, when the crystal chandeliers were lit and the Chianti flowed in torrents, the palace was turned into a bedlam of music and ribaldry. The night brought no respite, the dancers were unwearied and the musicians showed no sign of exhaustion. Troubadours sang ballads of a phenomenal obscenity. Bands of harpists and lutenists played in the chamber where boisterous crowds gorged themselves on the viands and wines from the Duke's well-laid tables and sideboards. The guests were served by scores of young men with painted lips and eyebrows.

On a stage set against a bucolic background the legends of the Greek gods and goddesses were re-enacted with breathtaking realism. Sometimes there were plays from Plautus or Terence or pantomimes from the biblical books such as *Susanna and the Elders* or

There was an opportunity for photos during a Vespers Service, March 8, at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, in St. Clair Shores. The Vespers Service was celebrated by clergy of both faiths with choir responses in English and Greek.

[Roman Catholic] Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland of Milwaukee and Metropolitan Silas of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of New Jersey co-chaired the meetings. The Joint Committee agenda included two topics of ecumenical interest: how a theology of communion would apply to Orthodox-Catholic relations, and the meaning of the term "sister churches" when applied to the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

Other issues discussed included the improvement in relations with the Oriental Orthodox Churches (Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Syrian and Malankara Syrian Orthodox Churches).

The sponsoring agencies were the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops (SCOBA) and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. There are currently five Orthodox jurisdictions represented on the Joint Committee: Greek Orthodox, Orthodox Church in America, Serbian Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, and Carpatho-Russian Orthodox. The Byzantine Catholic [Uniate] Diocese of Passaic, NJ was also represented.

(From *The Hellenic Chronicle*, Annual Easter Edition, 1994)

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*It seems to us that it would have behooved the SCOBA bishops to have been aware of the following information:*

### *Pope Insists He is the Infallible "Vicar of Christ"*

(*Christian News*, September 6, 1993)

In talks he made this year [1993], Pope John Paul II insists that he is the infallible "Vicar of Christ."

The Roman Catholic publication, *Pro Ecclesia* (509 Madison Avenue, N.Y.C., 10022), regularly includes "Talks of Pope John Paul II."

# 10

## *Sister Churches Hold Joint Vespers in Detroit*



Joint committee of Orthodox, Roman Catholic bishops  
meet in Detroit

DETROIT — [Roman Catholic] Archbishop Adam J. Maida and Bishop Timotheos [of the new calendar Greek Archdiocese] welcomed representatives of the nation's Roman Catholic and Orthodox Bishops to Detroit recently for the 12th meeting of bilateral dialogue of their respective churches.

The national joint meeting of Orthodox and Roman Catholic Bishops was held March 8-10 at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary, on Chicago and Linwood in Detroit.

from Solomon's *Song of Songs*, but the representations from Greek mythology were the most favored. The wives and daughters of the nobility vied with each other for the roles of the heroines and divinities of antiquity. Nymphs, fauns and satyrs danced and reveled unclothed. The scenes of gallantry, eroticism, and perversion which disgraced the courts of a Tiberius or a Messalina were revived and the lascivious stories once current in the brothels of ancient Rome were retold with utter brazenness. The play acting at the court consisted in the perpetration of all that was impure and shameless and the renunciation of every lingering spark of decency.

Indeed, the Renaissance was shifting into high gear in Florence.

Meanwhile, the clergy and high-ranking prelates looked on at these proceedings and — together with the others — roared with laughter and applauded wildly with approval.

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In the fifteenth century when all that we have described above was taking place, Italy was not the united country that we know today. In those days, the Appenine Peninsula contained a score of principalities, dukedoms, marquisates, republics, city-states and kingdoms, some so lilliputian as not to exceed the present principality of Monaco in size. A town like Ferrara or Florence did business and had diplomatic relations with all the other cities, but it lived a life of its own, had its own usages, customs, tastes, and traditions and even costumes. Ferrara was as proud and jealous of its own ways as Florence and Naples were of theirs. The one thing they had in common was their profession of a special recognition of the supremacy of religion. Yet, in the fifteenth century, few — including the Pope and his prelates — seemed to be sure which religion they preferred, Christianity or the paganism of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Despite their feelings about the supremacy of religion, however, this did not mean that these city-states were not frequently at odds, and even at war, with the Pope.

The wars were endless. For example, within the space of less than twenty years, the Duke of Calabria fought a long and bloody campaign against the papal army. Florence was at war with Pisa,



Genoa with Milan, Bologna with Mantua, while Ferrara was severely damaged by a Venetian expeditionary force. Not one of these endlessly warring principalities ever succeeded in establishing a complete predominance over the others.

Sometimes the papal forces won, sometimes they lost. When they lost, the peasants would band together and attack the nearest monastery with pitchforks, flails, and firebrands. Though not permanently organized on a military basis in support of this or that rival bishop, the monks would retaliate in turn. On all sides, reprisals were as savage as the blood feuds of the Arabian desert. The spoils of war were the highest wages obtainable in that era. Of compassion or humaneness nobody seems to have had an inkling. Why take prisoners and have so many extra mouths to feed? Unless a good price could be obtained for ransom, a man's captors — be they monk or peasant — generally made short shrift of him.

In all these constant wars, there were the inevitable and unfortunate losers. When civil strife broke out in Ferrara, while the Duke and the victors repaired to the banquet halls, the bodies of two hundred of the leading citizens, after being stripped and mutilated, were nailed to the eaves of the ducal palace. There they hung for ten days rotting in the sun.

Today the electric lighting reveals the full length and depth of the Castello's dungeon under the Lion's Tower in Ferrara. In the fifteenth century, the dungeon was without any means of exit or entry except for a slimy chute and a few iron grates to let in a feeble ray of light. Into these holes, then steeped in gloom and stench, the survivors of the losing party were dumped to decay and to be forgotten. These vaults were continuously replenished with prisoners, many of whom had lost all human semblance. The clanging of their chains, the screams of the violently insane and the weeping of despair could be heard plainly in the square through the gratings, while in the marble halls over the victims' heads, the strains of music and the roar of revelry continued night after night, as the aristocracy, the clergy, and the cardinals danced with the beautiful women, and the poets sang lewd songs.

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Let no one think, however, that all was frolics and warfare in

this to you, when you are not a political personage and cannot bear responsibility for all this [sic]. Here is why: in all these unprecedented barbarian crimes which are more than Godless, our Catholic church participated in two ways. A large number of clergy, priests, friars and organized Catholic youth took an active part in all this. It has also happened that Catholic priests became camp guards and Ustashi accomplices and so approved of the torture and slaughter of Christians. A Catholic priest even personally slaughtered an Orthodox clergyman. They could not have done all this without the permission of their bishops, and if they did, then they would have had to lose their jobs and be taken to court. Since this did not happen, it means that their bishops granted them permission.

"Secondly, the Catholic church made use of all this to convert the surviving Serbs. And while the soil was still steaming from the innocent victims' blood, while groans shuddered from the chests of the surviving victims, the priests, friars, nuns carried in one hand the Ustashi daggers and in the other their prayer books and rosaries. The whole of Srem is inundated with the leaflets written by Bishop Aksamovic and printed in his printing shop in Djakovo, calling upon the Serbs to save their lives and property by converting to Catholicism. It was as if our church wanted to show that it could destroy souls just as the Ustashi authorities destroy bodies. It is an even greater blot on the Catholic church, since at the same time many Orthodox churches, all the Orthodox monasteries have been confiscated, their property plundered as well as many historical treasures. Even the Patriarchal church in Sremski Karlovci has not been spared. All this violence against conscience and the spirit has brought even greater disgrace to the Croat nation and name."

*Prvoslav Grisogono received no reply from Archbishop Stepinac. Or rather, the reply he received was two more years of these atrocities, committed with the approval and encouragement of the Latin hierarchy in Croatia.*

*If and when the papal churches begin chanting hymns in honor of their new saint, Stepinac, will the hierarchs and clergy of "World Orthodoxy" — Rome's "Sister Church" — hear and speak out? Or will they hear only the siren song of ecumenism?*

cases of Serbs being forced to drink the warm blood of their slaughtered kin. Countless women, girls and children, mothers in front of their children and children in front of their mothers were raped or else sent off to Ustashi camps to serve the Ustashi; rapes even took place on the altars of Orthodox churches. In the Petrinje county a son was forced to rape his own mother. The slaughter of the Serbs in the Glina Orthodox church and the murder of Serbs on the altar of the Kladusa church is without precedent in history. There are detailed and original accounts of all these horrors. Even the Germans and Italians were astounded by these crimes. They photographed a huge number of cases of such slaughter. The Germans are saying that the Croats did this also during the Thirty-years War and that is why there has been a saying in Germany since then:

'God save us from the plague, hunger and the Croats.'

"The Srem Germans despise us because of this and behave in a more humane fashion with the Serbs. The Italians photographed a vessel with 3.5 kilograms of Serbian eyes, as well as a Croat who wore a necklace strung with Serbian eyes, and another one who came to Dubrovnik with a belt on which severed Serbian tongues were hanging!

"The horrors of the camps in which the thousands of Serbs were killed or were left to die from exposure, hunger and cold weather, are too terrible to mention. The Germans have been talking about a camp in Lika where there were thousands of Serbs; but when the Germans got there they found the camp empty, drenched in blood and bloody clothing. In that camp it has been said a Serbian bishop also lost his life. Thousands upon thousands of Serbs in the camp of Jasenovac are still being tortured as they are spending this fierce winter in wooden Gypsy shacks with no straw or covering and with a ration of two potatoes per day. In the history of Europe there have been no similar cases. One would have to go to Asia at the time of Tamerlane, of Genghis-Khan, or to Africa, to the countries of their bloodthirsty rulers to come upon similar situations. These events have shamed the name of Croatia for centuries to come. Nothing can absolve us fully from this ever again. We will not be able to tell even the last wretched man in the Balkans about our thousand year old Croatian culture, because even the Gypsies never perpetrated such cruelties. Why am I writing

those days. There were also men of great learning who could speak and write classical Greek and Latin fluently.

For example, Angelo Poliziano, one of the leading canons of the Cathedral of Florence, wrote such perfect Latin verse that his works were placed on a equal footing with Virgil, Horace, Ovid and other poets of the Golden Age. When he preached in church, he used the most edifying and inspiring images and parables, but in private he declared that the Christian creeds were absolutely meaningless.

Poliziano was the tutor of Lorenzo Medici's two eldest children, Piero and Giovanni, the first a thoroughly obnoxious creature who incorporated in his person all the vices of the age, the second a boy of sweet and lovable habits who was tonsured and ordained to the priesthood at the age of seven, was made Abbot of Font Douce in the French Diocese of Saintes and appointed Apostolic Protonotary at the age of eight, became a cardinal at fourteen, and was elevated to the supreme pontificate as Leo X in 1513 at the age of thirty-eight. "He is so strictly bred," wrote his teacher Poliziano in a report card, "that never from his mouth comes a lewd or even a light expression. He does not yield to his teachers in learning, nor to old men in gravity of demeanor." As Pope, young Leo spent a colossal fortune in the promotion of the arts and letters. But, like his teacher, he cared little for religion. "He would have made a perfect Pope," remarked one of his cardinals, "had he believed in God."

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Out of considerations of decency, beloved readers, we have not dared to describe in detail all that was going on with the Papacy's blessing and active participation during those years. Whatever has been written here is but a brief and very circumspect description of the political, ecclesiastical, spiritual, and moral environment that existed in Florence and Ferrara, and the other major cities of Italy in the fifteenth century. We must understand this environment so that we may be in a better position to understand the significance of another short episode in the history of these two great urban centers of the Renaissance.

The episode which we speak of began on March 4, 1438, when

a small group of Constantinopolitan clergymen arrived in Ferrara, led by their Emperor, John Paleologus, and the aged Ecumenical Patriarch Joseph. Among this group of foreign churchmen was Mark Eugenicus, newly consecrated metropolitan of the ancient diocese of Ephesus in Asia Minor.

One wonders: did these earnest Orthodox theologians really have any inkling of the spiritual climate that prevailed in Italy during those years? On the other hand, how did the secularized papal emissaries of Renaissance Rome view these beleaguered spokesmen for Orthodoxy? What could these Eastern hierarchs who came from the land of austere and hallowed icons find in common with the Florentine clergy who were busy cultivating a "church art" that matched ancient Rome's Saturnalia in carnality? What would the contrite and humble plain-song of these black-robed bishops sound like to the Latin prelates who delighted in the ribald lyrics of Ferrara's banquet hall music? Did these solemn and monk-like bishops of the Orthodox East truly believe that they could discuss the dogma of the procession of the Holy Spirit with the Papal Church's dancing cardinals? How would these Orthodox and truly Catholic clergymen who spoke the same tongue as Saint Basil the Great and Saint John Chrysostom be able to reason with the neo-pagan and high-ranking clergy of Florence who, with their polished Latin, could defend the divinity of Christ or Jupiter with equal skill and conviction?

In short, were these Orthodox clergy of New Rome well-advised in seeking to cast the sacred doctrines and teachings of the Church of Christ before the Papacy of the Renaissance, or had the Orthodox miscalculated badly — ignorant as they were of the spirit that prevailed in Ferrara and Florence?

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To his credit, Savonarola — the famous Dominican friar who lived in Ferrara and Florence during the fifteenth century — openly condemned many of the blatant aberrations of Christianity which had penetrated the Papacy. Yet, as an unwitting child of the Humanism and Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas, he too was unable to perceive the deeper causes of Rome's fall. He did not understand that the secularism which plagued and continues to

Christian. I have been meaning to do this for months hoping that the dreadful news from Croatia would cease so that I could collect my thoughts and write to you in peace.

"For the last ten months Serbs have been killed and destroyed in Croatia in the most ruthless manner and the value of their property that has been destroyed reaches the billions. The blushes of shame and anger cover the faces of every honest Croat.

"The slaughter of Serbs began from the very first day of the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (Gospic, Gudovac, Bosanska Krajina, etc.) and has continued relentlessly to this very day. The horror is not only in the killing. The killing includes everybody: old men, women and children. With accompanying barbarian torture. These innocent Serbs have been impaled, fire has been lit on their bare chests, they have been roasted alive, burned in their homes and churches while still living, covered with boiling water and then their skin peeled off and salt poured into their wounds, their eyes have been pulled out, their ears, noses and tongues cut off, the priests have had their beards and mustaches torn off from their skulls, their sex organs severed and put into their mouth, they have been tied to trucks and then dragged along the ground, nails have been pressed into their heads, their heads nailed to the floor, they have been thrown alive into wells and over cliffs, and grenades thrown after them, iron nails have broken their heads, children thrown into flames, into boiling water, into lime kilns, their legs torn from them, their heads smashed against wall, their backs broken against rocks and tree stumps, and many other horrible tortures were perpetrated, such as normal people can hardly imagine.

"Their rivers Sava, Drava, the Danube and their tributaries have carried thousands and thousands of their corpses. Dead bodies have been found with the inscription: 'direction Belgrade — traveling to King Peter'. In a boat which was found on the Sava river there was a heap of children's heads with the head of a woman (which could have been a head of one of the mothers of the children) with the inscription: 'Meat for the Jovanova Market in Belgrade.'

"Horrrifying is the case of Mileva Bozinic from Stanbandza whose child was removed from her womb. There was also the case of the roasted heads in Bosnia, the vessels full of Serbian blood, the



Nazi-occupied Europe." In their eyes, he was guilty principally of not speaking out early and often in public against the regime's atrocities against Serbs, Jews and Gypsies. The regime also pursued a harsh policy of forcing Serbs to convert to Catholicism.

(*The Washington Post*, Sept. 11, 1994)

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*Editors' Postscript: The remorseless fanaticism that gripped the papal church in Croatia during the early days of World War II can be understood from this excerpt from a diocesan newspaper of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Sarajevo:*

Until now, God spoke through papal encyclicals. And? They closed their ears . . . Now God has decided to use other methods. He will prepare missions, European missions, world missions. They will be upheld not by priests, but by army commanders. The sermons will be heard with the help of cannons, machine-guns, tanks and bombers.

*Before beginning the work of slaughter, the Ustashi were known to take public oaths in Roman Catholic churches.\* Truly, the "other methods" that the above statement refers to are nothing else but the time-honored methods of the Holy Inquisition, the Crusades, and the machine-gun-armed, Roman Catholic "Liberation Theology" monastics of the 60s and 70s in Central and South America.*

*Below we reprint an excerpt from the letter written by the eminent Croatian politician, Prvoslav Grisogono, which he addressed on February 8, 1942, to Archbishop Dr. Alojzije Stepinac. This is the horrifying picture that he draws of the events that were taking place at that time:*

"I am writing to you as a man to a man, as a Christian to a

\* For more information on this subject, see:

1. "On the Serbian Orthodox Martyrs of the Second World War," by Joachim Wertz, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 33, no. 1, 1983.

2. Edmund Paris, *Genocide in Satellite Croatia* (Chicago: American Institute for Balkan Affairs, 1961).

3. *Martyrdom of the Serbs* (Serbian Eastern Orthodox Diocese for the United States and Canada, 1943).

4. Stella Alexander, *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

5. Avro Manhattan, *The Vatican's Holocaust* (Ozark Books, 1988).

plague Roman Catholicism to this very day was not due simply to a period of lax morals, or to a few degenerate popes. He did not suspect that the problem lay rather in the papacy's unhinged theology — a theology which remains caught in the shackles of scholasticism and rationalism down to our own time. Consequently, what was the outcome of Savonarola's moralistic reforms? Remorseless Rome condemned him as "the greatest offender, here-siarch and arch-criminal," and declared that he should be hanged and then burned.

Therefore, on May 23, 1498, in the presence of the clergy, the monastic orders, and thousands of the city's inhabitants, his tortured and strangled body crashed into the roaring flames that enveloped the gallows which were set up for his execution in the Piazza in the center of Florence.

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In a different way — some sixty years before Savonarola's time — the Orthodox Catholic bishops who came to the Council of Florence also failed to persuade Rome to abandon her deviations from the Christian Faith. In spite of that previous failure, today's "Orthodox" ecumenists are again striving to unite with Rome by means of an ecumenical dialogue. What is even more amazing, "World Orthodoxy" and the Vatican have now taken to referring to each other as "Sister Churches."

But in the five centuries that have passed since Florence, what has changed?

In the field of dogmatics, some things have changed dramatically: since July 18, 1870, Rome's errors are now proclaimed with the unrepentant voice of papal infallibility! Further, as the articles that follow shall demonstrate (most of which contain *verbatim* quotes from papal sources), Roman Catholic theologians, with papal approval, are now busy dismantling what few elements there remain of Christian doctrine in their denomination.

In this sense — as incredible as it may seem — things are far worse now than what they were in fifteenth century Florence, as our readers will see.



# 1

According to the Jesuit author, Mitch Pacwa (*Touchstone*, summer 1992), "New Age fever is still climbing" in the Roman Catholic denomination.

The beliefs of the New Age movement, writes Pacwa, "grew out of the radical 1960s youth culture." This movement, comments Pacwa:

is a medley of discrete beliefs filched from primitive superstition, old-fashioned occultism, Hindu mysticism and nineteenth-century theosophy, mixed with questionable speculations from twentieth-century psychology, physics, and theology into a highly seasoned, morally individualistic, spiritual bouillabaisse. Its devotees have revived long discarded notions that confuse the universe with its Creator, successfully introducing into mainstream culture their unifying premise that "All is one," or "God is everything and everything is God." This monist pantheism, C. S. Lewis said, "may be the most primitive of all religions . . . the attitude into which the human mind naturally falls" without the light of divine revelation. Under whatever name presented, it is intrinsically a repudiation of the personal, transcendent, immutable, triune God.

The New Age movement is not a form of Satanic worship, but like the feminist Wicca to which it is organically related, a form of amoral neo-pagan nature worship. It is properly called *Gnostic* because, like ancient Gnostic religions, it holds that believers are saved ("enlightened" or "transformed") by esoteric knowledge. What knowledge? Since everything is God, I too am God, and my insights and impulses, however singular, are my own divine truth. Good and evil are whatever I say they are; what Christianity has called "sin" is simply further opportunity for experiential growth.

Zagreb, convicted by the Communist government of Yugoslavia in 1946 for collaborating with Croatia's World War II fascist regime, which was responsible for the slaughter of tens of thousands of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies. Cardinal Stepinac died under house arrest in 1960.

The pope, who had refused to visit Yugoslavia under Communist rule, said Cardinal Stepinac, "by his work, courage, patience, silence and, in the end, his death," offered himself "as a victim rather than deny his faith" when then-Communist dictator Josip Broz Tito had him tried and imprisoned.

The 74-year-old pope, who broke his leg in a fall in April, did not kiss the ground in his trademark arrival gesture, as he has on each of his sixty-two previous foreign trips. Instead, he kissed Croatian soil placed in an urn and held up to him.

Within minutes of arriving, the pontiff spoke of the "bitterness within me" at having to cancel for security reasons his visit to Sarajevo, capital of embattled Bosnia. Opposition by Serbia's Orthodox Church also blocked his plans to visit Belgrade. The pope said he was "knocking on all doors" trying to find a way to stop this "bloody and fratricidal war" in the former Yugoslavia.

With Yugoslavia's bloody past constantly invoked by those fighting over its corpse since 1991, the pope's visit here, in the words of a senior diplomat, "really opened the history books." At the center of that unresolved half-century-old torment stands the legacy of Cardinal Stepinac. Richard West, a British Catholic, wrote in a recent book that Cardinal Stepinac's wartime role and his subsequent trial and imprisonment by Tito contributed "to the breakup of Yugoslavia."

Cardinal Stepinac "was in his lifetime," West argued, "the major opponent not only of Tito but of the concept of south Slav unity, and since he is due for canonization, he may be remembered when Tito and Yugoslavia have been forgotten."

So alienated were Cardinal Stepinac's nationalist aspirations in what he felt was the Serb-dominated Yugoslavia of the 1930s that he joyfully welcomed the self-styled independent State of Croatia, a puppet Fascist regime established by the conquering Italians and Germans who occupied Yugoslavia in April 1941. For critics, Cardinal Stepinac, in a European diplomat's words, "was the most compromised senior member of the Roman Catholic clergy in



## 9

### *World Orthodoxy's Sister Church to Canonize Slayer of the Serbian Orthodox People?*

*Editors' Note: Not many people in the West are aware that almost 750,000 Serbian people were massacred during World War II by the Croatian Roman Catholics. This slaughter was carried out chiefly by a notorious terrorist organization known as the Ustashi, which worked in close collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church authorities in killing or forcibly converting the Orthodox Serbian people to the papal faith. Since the head of the papal church in Yugoslavia at that time was Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac (later rewarded for his "accomplishments" by being raised to cardinal by the Vatican), the Washington Post article that follows takes on greater significance.*

ZAGREB, Croatia — Pope John Paul II knelt and prayed yesterday at the tomb of a prelate whose actions in World War II and its aftermath made him a saint here, a Cold War martyr to communism for Roman Catholics worldwide, but a Fascist war criminal to many Serbs.

To sustained applause from those assembled in Zagreb's twelfth century Gothic cathedral, the pope praised Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac as "undoubtedly the most prominent martyr in Croatia's history." Leaning on a cane and looking frail, John Paul called Cardinal Stepinac "the hero of sacredness." It was the pope's first foreign visit in a year.

Croatian state television took the pope's choice of words as an indication that the Vatican intends to canonize the archbishop of

In view of all this, it is remarkable that recent polls show that a sizeable percentage of Protestants and a majority of Roman Catholics do not see that the New Age religion is at variance with their beliefs! Again, Pacwa notes:

When the Princeton Religious Resource Center polled American Christians earlier this year to see how their faith had been affected by New Age ideas, nearly a quarter of the Protestants surveyed (23 percent) said they saw no conflict between Christian doctrine and New Age beliefs. That troubling news paled beside the responses from Catholics, almost 60 percent of whom said New Age beliefs and Catholicism are entirely compatible. It would be false comfort to read those results as evidence that Catholics don't know what New Agers believe. More probably, they don't know what Catholicism teaches. A 1992 Gallup poll asked adult Catholics about the church's doctrine of the Eucharist. Even when the Catholic definition of Christ's Real Presence was read to them, only 30 percent recognized it; among younger adults, only 21 percent.

What have Catholic institutions been teaching instead of church doctrine? An appalling number have been teaching New Age theories and practices, and the phenomenon is growing. . .

Some Catholic parishes now offer *A Course in Miracles*, a study program straight from the monist heart of the New Age. On a bulletin board at the fairly orthodox church where I attended Holy Thursday Mass was a notice of a Jungian dreamwork class. At several seminaries, instructors use "guided imagery" to lead students in "energy-raising" witchcraft rituals during liturgy classes. Within a single week last spring, I heard parental complaints of New Age events at three unrelated Catholic high schools, in the Northeast, the South, and the Far West. The mildest involved bringing a yoga teacher into religion class as guest speaker. The most offensive was a student "retreat" virtually devoid of all Catholic doctrine or spirituality, where, as "male bonding" activities, boys painted their faces and pounded drums, while in another room, girls made "womanspirit bags" to hang around their necks. Catholic retreat centers from coast to coast offer enneagram courses, "creation spirituality" workshops, conferences on feminist, native American and even "goddess" spirituality. Catholic bookstores across the country are stocked with heterodox works like Joseph Girzone's *Joshua*, Rose-

mary Ruether's *Woman-Church*, Paul Knitter's *No Other Name?*, Bruce Lawrence's *Nizam Ad-Din Awliya*, John Hitchcock's *The Web of the Universe*, Michael von Bruck's *The Unity of Reality*, and Sandra Schneider's *Beyond Patching*, as well as Matthew Fox's many titles. Professors at Catholic universities — and seminaries — ridicule those who cling to the articles of the Apostle's Creed as "fundamentalist folk Catholics"; Catholic college students are encouraged to sample translated Eastern mysticism in "centering prayer," or to attend, for example, a panel discussion on Christology led by feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether, who denies the Incarnation.

"Especially among church middle management [i.e., the parish clergy and the monastic teaching orders]," writes Pacwa, "the movement is a fulminating plague. However unlikely this may seem to readers whose images of nuns and priests were formed when films like *The Bells of St. Mary's* were not wildly inaccurate, the evidence is overwhelming."

\* \* \*

Only a short time ago, Patriarch Parthenius of Alexandria declared, "When I speak against Islam or Buddhism, then I am not found in agreement with God." As the article "New Age Bishops" (Orthodox Christian Witness, July 4/17, 1990) observed, not one Orthodox patriarch or bishop took Patriarch Parthenius to task or required him to retract this clear-cut New Age doctrine.

In view of these developments, should we be surprised that ecumenistic Orthodox clergy are pursuing union with the papal see — which they refer to as their "Sister Church"?



"A study of numerical trends in the U.S. priesthood several years ago concluded that the number of active diocesan priests was on its way to declining to 21,000 by the year 2005, while the number of religious priests would fall to 13,000 — a total of only 34,000. Whether or not the numbers are exactly right, the trend is unmistakably clear.

"The sharply reduced number of priests and nuns seems certain to produce a significant cutback in the Church's institutional and programmatic presence, besides vastly increasing the number of parishes experiencing the reality of 'priestless Sundays.'"

(*National Catholic Register*, March 27, 1994)





days, April 16th, 23rd, and 30th, to address 'our questions about homosexuality, discuss our moral decision-making processes, look at biblical and Church teaching, and listen to the experiences of gay and lesbian Catholics,' according to a notice which appeared in the bulletin of Sacred Heart Cathedral on April 10th.

"The pastoral associate at Sacred Heart Cathedral is Sr. Kay Heverin, one of the presenters at the homosexuality seminar, who has been connected with the Synod Northwest Region, which endorsed the event as a means of carrying out the agenda of the Diocesan Synod.

"The synod, which concluded last October, called for more 'moral education' in the diocese.

"This program was also discussed during a talk show on WHAM-AM radio, but it only elicited a number of angry calls from listeners who complained of the 'gay activism' they perceived in Catholic parishes throughout the diocese."

(*The Wanderer*, May 12, 1994)

### *"Another Poll; Mostly Bad News"*

"Possibly the starkest fact emerging from the *Times* study is that the nuns responding had a median age of 65. In the last three decades the number of U.S. women religious already has been cut in half — from 180,000 in 1965 to 94,000 last year.

"The priesthood is in only somewhat better shape. In 1965 there were 36,000 diocesan priests and 22,700 religious priests — a total of 58,700. As of last year, there were 33,500 diocesan priests and 17,600 religious — a total of 51,100.

"As with the religious women, the number of priests also appears to be entering a period of rapid decline due mainly to the falloff in candidates in recent decades. Although numbers are up in a few dioceses, they are off sharply overall.

"Last fall the number of U.S. Catholic seminarians was down 2.2 per cent from a year earlier — 6,244 compared with 6,383 — with the largest decline (from 3,178 to 2,915) occurring at the crucial theology level among students in their final years of preparation for ordination. The 8.3 per cent drop was the biggest in 12 years.



## 2

*The previous chapter described how New Age beliefs have become a "fulminating plague" among the Roman Catholic parish clergy and monastic teaching orders. It noted also that an "Orthodox" patriarch has expressed similar New Age doctrines without the least censure from his fellow hierarchs in "World Orthodoxy" — nor was this patriarch asked to make any retraction of his syncretistic and neo-pagan teachings that, like Gnosticism of old, are becoming so wide-spread today.*

*The chapter that follows is based on information reported in a conservative Roman Catholic periodical and details how the New Age has spread into Roman Catholicism's highest echelon.*

### *Some Incredible Events Regarding Paul VI and John-Paul II*

According to the Roman Catholic periodical *Chapel Circular* (July–September, 1992), when Pope Paul VI visited the UNO, he called that organization "mankind's last hope for peace." During a visit to UNESCO headquarters in Paris, he praised this body, which, like its parent organization UNO, is militantly atheistic, and he urged it to continue its work (destruction of Christian culture, corruption of education and rewriting/falsifying history).

On January 25, 1983, under the leadership of Pope John Paul II, there was the promulgation of the New Canon Law, which notably lifted the sanctions of excommunication against the members of Freemasonry.

Consider also the following developments:

*May 10, 1984. In Thailand, John Paul II visited the Supreme*

Patriarch Vasana Tera. From his throne the Patriarch welcomed John Paul II, who bowed deeply.

August 8, 1985. In Togo, John Paul II assisted at animist rites in "the holy forest" near Lome. He also participated in satanic rites at Kara and at Togoville.

August 19, 1985. At Casablanca, beside King Hassan II ("Commander of the Believers") in the stadium where there were gathered 80,000 young Moslems, John Paul II preached "dialogue with Islam" and affirmed that "we have the same God."

February 2, 1986. During a voyage to India all the newspapers and television screens showed John Paul II receiving the mark of Tilak from a Hindu priestess. On February 5, 1986 at Madras, John Paul II received imposition of the "sacred ashes" from the hands of a Hindu woman.

April 13, 1986. For the first time in the entire history of the Church since St. Peter [sic], John Paul II went to the great synagogue of Rome where he was received by the Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff and participated in the service.

October 27, 1986. The "Assisi Gathering," called for by John Paul II. Following are some comments by the Italian newspaper *Si Si No No*:

Never has Our Lord been so outraged, never have His holy places been so profaned, His Vicar so humiliated, His people so scandalized by His own ministers, as at Assisi. The superstitions of the several false religions practiced at Assisi pale by comparison to the betrayal of our Lord by these ministers.

In St. Peter's the bonzes adored the Dalai Lama (for them, a re-incarnation of the Buddha). In that same church a statue of the Buddha was placed atop the Tabernacle on the main altar.

In St. Gregory's, American Indians prepared their peace pipe on the altar; in Santa Maria Maggiore's, Hindus, sitting around the altar, invoked the whole range of Hindu gods; in Santa Maria degli Angeli's, John Paul II sat in a semi-circle of wholly identical seats amidst the heads of other religions so that there should be neither first nor last.

Other titles given this "Assisi Gathering" by the Italian press included: OUR FATHERS WHO ARE IN HEAVEN; IN THE NAME OF ALL GODS; THE PEACE OF THE GODS; and, ALL MANKIND'S GODS AT ASSISI MEETING.

She also pointed to "a growing impatience with the persistence of exclusive language" in the church.

(May 30, 1994)

### *Roman Catholics "Should Prepare For Women Priests"*

GENEVA — A prominent Dutch theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx, has said the Roman Catholic Church must prepare for women priests by means of "respectful, serene and polite homilies," according to the US-based *New Woman, New Church*, quoting an interview given by Schillebeeckx in Italy. "The exclusion of women from the ministry is a purely cultural issue, which no longer makes sense," he said.

There were no theological obstacles to ordaining women, but there would be "painful schisms" if people were not prepared to accept the change, Schillebeeckx said.

(*Ecumenical Press Service*, April 25, 1994)

### *"Rochester Diocese Promotes Homosexuality and Disparages Church Teaching at Seminary"*

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Just how aggressive the promotion of homosexuality and the homosexual lifestyle has become in Bishop Matthew Clark's Diocese of Rochester was made clear during a three-weekend seminar on homosexuality held at Holy Name of Jesus Parish.

"Speaking from the sanctuary of the church during the second seminar, H. Darrell Lance, former professor of Old Testament interpretation at Rochester-Colgate Divinity School, told his audience that the oldest liturgies of the Catholic Church were homosexual marriage rites, which predate rituals for heterosexual marriage.

"This outrageous, blasphemous assertion, however, fits perfectly with all the other presentations supporting the homosexual lifestyle given during the three-part seminar by Bishop Clark's most trusted aides, including priests, religious, and an ex-nun.

"The three-part seminar was held on three consecutive Satur-

## Nuns Seek More Power in Catholic Church

By Greg Burke, *Religious News Service*

VATICAN CITY (RNS) — Catholic nuns, preparing for a major Vatican meeting this fall on religious orders, have asked to be included in decision-making positions in the church.

More than 425 heads of women's religious orders responded to a survey about the October Synod of Bishops in Rome, the theme of which is religious life.

A summary of their responses was published in the latest bulletin of the International Union of Superiors General, a federation of the heads of women's religious orders.

"The synod is viewed as an ideal opportunity to explore avenues and Gospel reasons for full inclusion of consecrated women in decision-making roles, in reflection processes and in ecclesial ministries," the article said.

There are nearly one million Catholic nuns worldwide.

The article, written by Sr. Marguerite Letorneau of the Montreal-based Sisters of Charity, or Gray Sisters, did not mention specifically the demand for ordination to the priesthood.

But the nuns are asking for more power in the church, and the October meeting promises to be a lively one.

"A first step might be the presence of qualified women religious in major positions of the Curia (the Vatican hierarchy)," Letorneau wrote. Although hundreds of women religious work at the Vatican, none currently hold major positions.

For our readers' benefit we are reprinting below an article that appeared in the newspaper *Christian News* (Jan. 11, 1993). After reading this article, one can only wonder what the Orthodox who are involved in the dialogue with Rome believe they are accomplishing. It is quite obvious from the following article that a significant number of Roman Catholic clergy and theologians are moving as fast as they can away from any form of Christianity that they might have possessed once. Although this has been going on for some years, and the liberals have shown no sign of remorse or respite whatsoever, nevertheless, the pope refuses to censure them.

This state of affairs has prompted many to observe that, in matters of faith — if the case of the now deceased Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung is any indication — the pope will discipline such individuals only when they question the doctrines of Papal Supremacy and Papal Infallibility. In other words, for the papacy, the primary concern is over matters of authority. In contrast, Orthodox Christians have priorities that are quite different. During the Divine Liturgy, for example, we proclaim that God is to be worshipped "with one mouth and one heart" — that is, in unanimity of faith. We cannot join in worship with others if they have a divergent belief.

Such being the case, then, on what possible basis can "Orthodox" ecumenists justify their continued concelebrations and joint prayers with people who openly, and often in a pointedly offensive way, reject the authority of the Holy Gospels? Whatever justifications the ecumenists may have, we feel it is our duty to offer our readers a candid picture of where many Roman Catholic theologians and clergy are heading — with papal acquiescence and approval.

## Roman Catholic Liberals Reject the Christ of the Bible

*The Catholic World* has joined various major secular publications which recently attacked the Christ of the Bible, historic Christianity, and the ancient creeds of the Christian Church. *Christian News* (January 4) reprinted "Who Was Jesus?" from *USA Weekend* which claims to have 33.5 million readers. The magazine appears in major newspapers throughout the United States. *USA Weekend* promoted the views of the Jesus Seminar, a group of several hundred religion scholars and theologians who reject the Christ of the Bible and claim that Jesus Christ never actually said most of the words attributed to him in the Bible.

The cover story of the December 21 *U.S. News & World Report* questioned the historicity of the Christmas story and left the impression that the Christmas story may not be founded upon actual historic fact.

*Newsweek*, *Life*, *Time*, and the *Atlantic Monthly*, and other major publications have had similar stories in the past at Christmas time.

"The Jesus of History: How Much Can We Know?" is the theme of the January/February *The Catholic Word*, published by the Roman Catholic Paulist Press.

*The Catholic Word* includes an interview with Father John Meier, professor of New Testament at The Catholic University of America. He holds an S.T.D. from the Gregorian University, Rome. He is the author of numerous books, including *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, Volume I (*Anchor Bible Reference Library*, Doubleday, 1991). *Christian News* has had several articles showing that Father Meier and other Roman Catholic liberals reject the Christ of the Bible ("Pope Refuses to Discipline Liberals — Roman Catholic Scholars Reject Christ of Bible," *Christian News Encyclopedia*, pp. 4009–4010).

Father Meier says in *The Catholic Word*: "When it comes to the words of Jesus, I think one has to distinguish. In very rare cases, at best, can we hope to regain the exact words of Jesus . . ."

Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt, R.S.M., says in "The Historical Jesus: More Than Just the Facts": "When we look in the Gospels for evidence of the historical Jesus, we actually encounter very little data

fore, when a Jesuit theologian in India is reported as saying: 'The fact that members of the higher religions, such as Hindus and Buddhists, do not convert may be a sign that they are not meant to convert.' It is through means such as these that the diffusion of syncretism has been taking place through the auspices of Rome.

"Furthermore, in spite of its outward adherence to the name of Christ, the Church of Rome has provided more syncretists than any other branch of the professing Christian church. . .

"When the Pope attended the pioneering interfaith gathering at Assisi in 1986, one lone voice protested on that syncretistic occasion. A Roman Catholic follower of the traditionalist Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre braved the inevitable accusation of 'being negative' by handing out leaflets in the main square, telling reporters that 'the Pope is trying to make a super-religion with himself at the head.' This was an astute observation.

"In point of fact, the Roman Catholic Church is now in the forefront of a syncretistic preparation which completely denies the biblical understanding of salvation. A brief survey of the authoritative statements of the Vatican demonstrates, without a doubt, its commitment to the Hindu concept of religions, which claims that 'all paths lead to the top of the mountain.'

"We can easily see these principles worked out in the syncretistic writings and activities of such people as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the well-known Jesuit and Marxist who has had a great influence on the New Age Movement. Other Roman Catholics who have also been prominent in this respect are Thomas Merton, champion of the amalgamation of Zen Buddhism and Christianity, Fr. Bede Griffiths, and Dom Aelred Graham. Bede Griffiths sums up their philosophy that all people of all religions are really believers, when he writes:

"No one can say in the proper sense that the Hindu, the Buddhist or the Muslim is an "unbeliever." I would say rather that we have to recognize him as our brother in Christ."

"Between them, these three monks have done much to promote the interfaith gospel, utilizing such vogue concepts as 'cosmic spiritual evolution,' the 'Omega Point,' and Hindu or Zen Catholicism."





# 7

## *Rome and the Pope Promote Universalism*

"The Pope and the Roman Catholic Church today are promoting an anti-scriptural universalism," says Alan Morrison in *The Serpent and the Cross*.

The book is "dedicated to the memory of Irenaeus (c.AD 130–c.200), Bishop of Lyons, apologist for Christian truth against forbidden knowledge."

The author writes, "It will help our understanding considerably if we realize that when we are dealing with the Vatican, we are not dealing merely with one of many manifestations of professing Christianity; we are dealing with syncretism, pure and simple. This syncretism. . . has compromised with indigenous heathen religions everywhere it has taken its mission in the world. Among the more notable examples are in Latin America, where Romanism has easily blended itself with indigenous sorcery into occult religions such as Umbanda. In a recent BBC World Service report, journalist Ben Bradshaw spoke in some detail about the Brazilian Roman Catholic Church's admission of local mysticism and spiritism into conventional Roman Catholic beliefs and practice. In Guatemala, too, there has been an open blending of Romanism with the predominant indigenous Mayan religion, which can be observed in the major cathedrals. Over in India, we find the cult of 'Hindu-Catholicism' propagated by the monk Abhishiktananda (alias Dom Henri le Saux, O.S.B.). Jesuit missionaries in the lands of the East are renowned for being ready to 'soften the transition from oriental modes of thought to Christianity,' a tendency which has persisted to this present day. We should not be surprised, there-

that can be independently verified — one important test of whether we can call it historical.

## *"What the Gospels Do Not Prove"*

"There is no marble inscription that says in effect 'Jesus Was Here in AD 30' as there is for Pontius Pilate, attesting his presence or influence in the land of Israel. Historians dispute where Jesus was actually born — in Bethlehem, or in Galilee. The exact year of his birth is another conundrum, as well as the date of his death. The circumstances of his birth and his parentage are in question and cannot be verified according to contemporary standards of fact-finding. With some Gospel-based grounds for asserting Jesus was not married, we are still left in question about his degree of literacy, level of formal education, multilingual skill, and employment in a trade. For most of our insights we have to read between the lines.

"What actually happened during the miracles done by Jesus forms another body of historically unverifiable narrative. Skeptics unconvinced by miracle stories maintain that: the widow's son at Nain and the daughter of Jairus were in actuality comatose, not dead; that Jesus jostled them and at that point they 'came to'; and that when Jesus walked on water he was actually sloshing ankle-deep along a sandbar in the shallows which appeared to disciples in a boat off-shore as though the master were treading across deep water. The evangelists, however, offer an entirely different interpretation of the wondrous deeds of Jesus, a perspective at odds with the skeptics.

"The tradition in the New Testament records that Jesus died after being tortured to death during the administration of Pontius Pilate. Historical research can verify that crucifixion was a common form of executing criminals and political subversives under Roman administration in the province of Syria, and that its public character was meant to deter rebellion. The legal prelude to Jesus' death remains murky. Apart from the varying versions of the passion in the Gospels, there are no court documents to verify the religious or political charges against him. We will probably never know the quasi-legal sequence of events which led to his death.

"Informed readers of the Gospels today assume that some

degree of involvement in the death of Jesus was shared by the Roman administration, the Sadducean party holding power in Jerusalem, the turncoat disciple Judas, all contextualized within a climate of pronounced political tension in Roman-occupied Judea. For non-academics, an answer to 'How did Jesus die?' often depends largely on present-day feelings that Christians have about the Jewish community, not any special access Christian scholars have to historically verifiable data from the first century

"As for the events after the death of Jesus, whatever 'happened' at the resurrection cannot be verified historically, even by those who claim the Shroud of Turin holds the secret of the moment when Jesus burst back to life. As John P. Meier has asserted in the introduction to his well-documented study *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, there is no historically verifiable proof of Jesus' resurrection. That conviction comes from faith, like the conception of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit."

### *Jesus the Peasant*

Father Jerome Neyrey, S.J., is the author of "Jesus the Peasant: Viewing Jesus in a Cultural and Social Perspective" in *The Catholic World*. Father Neyrey is professor of New Testament Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Commenting on John Dominic Crossan's new book *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, Father Neyrey says: "Crossan's book, then, presents an excellent vehicle for viewing Jesus more accurately in terms of the dynamic but strange cultural world in which he lived. It can serve as a masterful digest of fresh and cogent literature on the social and cultural world of Jesus. The portrait of Jesus the peasant which emerges deserves to be studied in great seriousness, even if it is a disquieting view of a man who lived in turbulent times and made many enemies."

The December 23, 1991, *New York Times* reported in "Peering Past Faith to Glimpse the Jesus of History": "Professor Crossan argues that the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper and the appearance of the risen Jesus to His disciples are not records of actual events but dramatic visualizations created by the early Christians to make concrete their experiences of the continued presence of Jesus after His death."

rect, then Rome should forget about them. Father Brown says that Jesus was mistaken when He said: "As Jonah was in the belly of the big fish three days, so the Son of Man will be in the bosom of the earth three days" (Matt. 12:40). If Jesus was wrong about Jonah, then He is really not the omniscient God.

When Christ was in the state of humiliation upon this earth He did not always make full use of His power to know all things. He could have, had He chosen to do this. However, He never made a mistake or told a lie. Father Brown says that Jesus was in error when He said that David was thinking of the Messiah in the opening line of Psalm 110 [Psalm 109 in the Orthodox Bible]. Father Brown is correct when he observes that few modern scholars would interpret Psalm 110 the way Jesus did. However, many modern Bible scholars do not believe that Jesus is God, the second person in the Holy Trinity. They have departed from the Christian faith.

Of course, it will be rather futile for conservative Roman Catholics to file formal charges of false doctrine against Father Brown. The Pope maintains that the views expressed by Father Brown should be tolerated within the Roman Catholic Church. He has taken no action against hundreds of Roman Catholic theologians throughout the world who are attacking such doctrines as the inerrancy of the Bible, the deity of Christ, the physical resurrection of Christ, etc., as long as they do not challenge his human authority. The only Roman Catholic churchmen he has excommunicated are a few who have challenged his authority.

Filing formal charges versus Father Brown may do some good if it shows conservative Roman Catholics that the Pope is a theological modernist and universalist who maintains that Jews, Muslims and other non-Christians can get to heaven without faith in Jesus Christ.

\* \* \*

*After reading Fr. Raymond Brown's views regarding our Saviour, we are not surprised to hear Rabbi Burton Visotzky of Jewish Theological Seminary in New York say of him, "I count him among my rabbis."*

"The recently-published Roman Catholic *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* attacks some of the most basic doctrines of historic Christianity. It maintains that Christianity is a man-made religion which gradually evolved rather than the only divinely-revealed faith. It supports the Pope when he says that Jews, Muslims and other non-Christians also worship the true God.

"The commentary says that the Bible contains errors, fiction, myth and legend. . . .

"According to the Roman Catholic commentary, Jesus is not the pre-existent omniscient son of the Father, whose flesh and bones actually rose from the grave. The commentary presents Christianity as one of the many human-fabricated world religions which gradually evolved through the centuries. The Roman Catholic authors argue that such doctrines as the resurrection from the dead were not taught or believed until after the entire Old Testament had been written."

No Roman Catholic theologian has refuted what we said about *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*.

Father Brown's recently published *Response to 101 Questions on the Bible* undermines the entire Christian faith. He attacks the inerrancy of the Bible, the real deity of Christ when he argues that Christ was in error, the historicity of much of the Bible, the reality of the wise men, the infancy narratives, etc.

Conservative Roman Catholics, who have long recognized that Father Brown is a liberal who undermines historic Christianity, should file formal charges of false doctrine versus Father Brown. His latest book consists of responses to 101 Questions. He should be put on a witness stand by some articulate and intelligent theologians who would question him on key doctrinal issues where he leaves the door wide open for denials of the deity, real virgin birth and physical resurrection of Christ. Father Brown says he accepts some key doctrines, such as the "virginal conception" of Jesus, not because they are taught in the Bible but because this is what Rome insists is the truth. He should be questioned on the basis of his writings, and asked to either retract the heresy he clearly espouses or be found guilty of heresy. Those who gave his writings a *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* should be exposed for either their incompetency or complicity.

If Father Brown's views on the origin of the Sacraments are cor-

The cover story of the December 18-25 *Christian Century* was titled "'A Jewish Peasant' and John Dominic Crossan on the Historical Jesus." Crossan does not affirm the historicity of Christ's miracles, his virgin birth and physical resurrection. Commenting on the journey to Emmaus by two of the disciples of Jesus after the crucifixion, Crossan concludes his *Christian Century* article: "The symbolism is obvious, as is the metaphoric condensation of the first years of Christian thought and practice into one parabolic afternoon. Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens."

Crossan, whose work is commended in *The Catholic World*, does not maintain that Jesus actually rose physically from the dead and really appeared to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus after his crucifixion. Crossan dismisses the accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper as fiction. Crossan is one of the founders of the Jesus Seminar, a group of scholars who maintain that Jesus never said most of the words attributed to him in the Bible. The scholars come from various denominations, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

### *Infancy Narrative Not Reliable History*

A review in *The Catholic World* of Crossan's *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* and Meier's *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, Vol. 1 says: "What then of Bethlehem, the Magi, the flight into Egypt, and above all the doctrine of the Virgin Birth? Here Meier is one with Raymond E. Brown and his 1977 study *The Birth of the Messiah*. The infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke cannot be taken as reliable history, but should be seen instead as parallel yet remarkably divergent stories based on an early theological tradition."

Father Raymond Brown has long rejected the real virgin birth of Christ. He claims that the authors of the New Testament were not eyewitnesses of Jesus. According to Brown, Jesus was not the all-knowing God. Father Brown says the Bible contains errors and fiction, a person can get to Heaven without believing in Jesus, Moses did not write the first five books of the Bible, the Gospels should be considered developing tradition rather than presenting actual history which is to be accepted in some literal manner, and

the Biblical account of the wise men coming to Jesus may not be historical.

The *Christian News Encyclopedia* has a large section on the Roman Catholic Church showing that prominent liberal Roman Catholic theologians reject the deity of Christ and other basic doctrines of historic Christianity. The *Encyclopedia* includes "Who Do They Say I Am?" reprinted from the Summer, 1990, *Notre Dame Magazine*. The Roman Catholic publication says that the Bible contains fiction, myth and embellishments. It quotes Roman Catholic theologians as denying the deity of Jesus Christ. The Roman Catholic publication is in general agreement with the liberal Roman Catholic theologians it quotes.

\* \* \*

After reading the foregoing article, what Orthodox Christian could possibly desire union with people who hold such beliefs? Or refer to a denomination that condones these teachings as a "Sister Church"? Or say, as Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew did recently, that Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism are the "two lungs of the Body of Christ"?\*

One can only wonder what has happened to the mind of this so-called "body."

\* *The Orthodox Church*, February 1993, p. 6.



## 6

### *Who will File Charges of False Doctrine Against Father Brown? \**

Father Raymond Brown, has been described by *Time* as "probably the premier [Roman] Catholic scripture scholar in the U.S." Father Brown has been invited to speak by hundreds of groups, schools, and churches throughout the nation. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Concordia College, Bronxville, praised him when he spoke at this LCMS college.

Conservative Roman Catholics have rightly objected to Father Brown's theological modernism and attacks upon some basic Christian doctrines and the historicity of the Bible. Yet he was appointed by Pope Paul VI to the Roman Pontifical Biblical Commission, and with church approval he has served for many years on the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

Our special issue on "Roman Catholic Theologians vs. Christ" contains more than 100 quotations, some of them quite lengthy, from *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Father Brown and two other liberal Roman Catholic scholars. They point out that the views expressed in the new commentary are not those of three liberal scholars but those of some 70 contributors who represent the position taken in every sort of Roman Catholic university, college and seminary in the U.S., Canada, and abroad. We began this issue with a story titled "Roman Catholic Theologians Attack Christianity:"

\* From an article in *Christian News*, January 1, 1991.

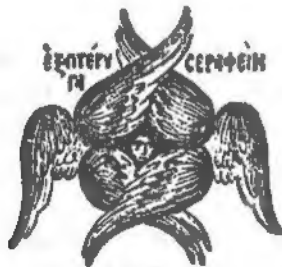


Bishop Maximos is said to be the most conservative and traditional bishop in the new calendar Greek Archdiocese. In view of this, Bishop Maximos' high estimation of Professor Crossan's work takes on a special significance, especially when one has read what Crossan's beliefs actually are (see pp. 20–21).

Bishop Maximos is undoubtedly correct in observing that Crossan "has succeeded in doing the impossible"—that is, in denying the witness of the Holy Scriptures and of the entire early Church! In other sciences, this is known as "cooking the evidence". . . \*

When its most "conservative" and "traditional" bishops express such views, then we are forced to concede that perhaps "World Orthodoxy" and Roman Catholicism really should unite.

\* For an Orthodox Christian critique of the premises and methods of Biblical criticism, see *The True Vine*, vol. 5, no. 2, issue no. 18, 1993, Roslindale, Massachusetts.



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The January 3 *National Catholic Register* interviews Marcel Jacques Dubois, O.P., who "is perhaps the best-known and most respected Catholic in Israel. A distinguished expert in Jewish-Catholic dialogue and an Israeli citizen, he serves as a consultant to the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism and the Vatican representative on the International Liaison Committee for Catholic-Jewish dialogue."

Father Dubois does not believe that Christianity is the one and only true and divinely revealed faith or that Christ is the only way to Heaven.

He says that "Christianity is a continuity and an accomplishment of Judaism. But a Jew faithful to his identity and, in particular, faithful to the Torah and practicing the *mitzat* (laws) is surely in contact with God, just as we come to Him through Jesus Christ."

"Buddhists, Shintoists and Hindus have no reason to be disturbed by Jesus Christ," says Father Dubois. "He's not in their tradition. For almost 20 centuries, we've been divided by a family quarrel — a bloody one. I emphasize, it's *within the family*. We are witnesses of the same God. We're thinking of the same kingdom."

If such is the case, then "for almost 20 centuries" the Church has wrongly been striving to bring others to the Christian Faith. Likewise, our Saviour Himself wrongly commanded the Apostles: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19–20).

Since Fr. Dubois is the Vatican's expert representative in these inter-religious matters, we must assume that the views he expresses are authoritative.

The following article is from *The Illuminator* (May-June, 1993), the official newspaper of the new calendar Greek Orthodox diocese of Pittsburgh.

### *Christian Associates Celebrate Successful Third Theological Parley*



Bishop Maximos is in the middle; to his right, in the light gray suit, is John Dominic Crossan

(Pittsburgh, Pa.) — The Third Theological Conference under the auspices of the Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania

convened at the [Greek Archdiocese] St. Nicholas Cathedral as scheduled on May 16. Nearly a hundred persons came to take part in the conference.

John Dominic Crossan, [Roman Catholic] professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the DePaul University, Chicago, and author of *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, gave his presentation entitled "Jesus: A Jewish Peasant." Rev. Robert C. Hawk, member of the Christian Associates' Theological Advisory Committee, and Roger A. Statnick, member of the Christian Associates' Board of Delegates, gave the responses. A lively discussion followed.

Refreshments were served by the Philoptochos council.

The participants had the opportunity of interacting with an internationally known and respected biblical scholar who understands Jesus in light of his times.\* They had the opportunity to hear the latest in terms of how scholars are looking at the historical Jesus today.

Bishop Maximos expressed his appreciation of Professor Crossan's work by saying that in the estimation of a well known German scholar, "the life of Jesus cannot be told." "We now have a scholar who tried and succeeded in doing the impossible," the bishop said.

Below, we add also the text of a flier announcing a live television broadcast of "The Jesus Summit" sponsored by Grace Cathedral (Episcopalian) in San Francisco, on February 19, 1994. Regarding John Dominic Crossan, the announcement stated the following:

"John Dominic Crossan is Professor of Biblical Studies at DePaul University in Chicago. In his newly published *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (Harper, 1994), Crossan untangles the elaborate fabric of fact and fiction in the four gospels and presents a stunning depiction of the authentic Jesus, a savvy and courageous Jewish peasant who challenged the sacrosanct rules regarding class, gender, and status to proclaim a kingdom of absolute equality."

\* Editor's note: If the "his" here refers to Crossan, then this statement is true; if the "his" refers to our Saviour, it could not be more wrong.